

**Testimony Before the Appropriations Committee  
DMHAS BUDGET HEARING**

**February 24, 2022**

**H.B. No. 5307**

John Warga

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative Dathan, Representative Nolan, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is John Warga and I am a registered voter in the City of Bridgeport. I am here to testify in regards to the governor's proposed budget for the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

I am a member of Bridge House in Bridgeport. I have been a member of Bridge House since 2008. I go to Bridge House to be able to work and do anything else that is asked of me.

I do not like sitting at home alone. If I sat alone at home, I would end up back in the psych ward at Bridgeport Hospital. Being in the hospital—any hospital—is more depressing than it is helpful to my mental health.

If it wasn't for Bridge House being open, I don't know what would happen to me. Bridge House is like a family to me—we come from different backgrounds, different religions, etc., but we are a family of people living with mental health conditions and those who serve them. You can come there and work anywhere you like within the program, as well as talk to any staff without being judged. I am so thankful to be a member of Bridge House and to have been asked to serve on its Board of Directors.

Thank you for reading my testimony.